



**Town of Framingham  
Board of Selectmen**

## **Policy on Customer Service**

**Issue date: May 1, 2000**

**Type of policy: New ( X )    Amendment ( )**

**Effective date: May 1, 2000**

**Level: Department ( )    Division ( )    Town Wide ( X )**

### **Policy Statement**

The Town of Framingham is committed to operating in an efficient customer service orientated manner throughout its entire operation. Excellent customer service results in an organization meeting the needs of its customers in a consistent and professional manner.

### **References**

None.

### **Special Terms**

None.

### **Policy Description**

#### **I.     Employee Responsibility**

All employees of the Town of Framingham are to be made aware of the importance of customer service within the Town's operation. Employees should be clearly aware that customer service abilities in all levels of their work will greatly impact employment evaluations and promotional

opportunities. The Town of Framingham will recognize employees for excellence in customer service through the Employee Recognition Program.

A. Supervisors and Management Personnel

Leadership by example is a key component to excellence in customer service. Town management must continually promote in their actions, words, and writing the paramount importance of customer service standards. Performance evaluations of management personnel will be substantially impacted by the ability of a manager to provide high levels of customer service and the ability to train and supervise employees to do the same.

II. Standards of Performance

The Town recognizes that for a successful interaction with a customer not only must the end result be satisfactory, the entire experience must be reflective of a quality organization. There are many aspects of our operations that must clearly be based in the ideal of excellent customer service.

A. Processes

There are many processes within Town government that require formal procedures be followed. Departments must strive to make these processes as simple as possible to access and complete. Simplification of forms, easy to understand directions and short time lines are key examples of efforts that should be put forth to assure customer service orientated processes are in place.

B. Marketing and Communication

The Town provides information and services to residents on an ongoing basis. Communication with the public be it oral or written, must be clear, concise, consistent and easy to access. Departments should strive to utilize all communication possibilities as efficiently as possible to assure that the residents remain informed and aware on a regular basis.

C. Printed Material

All printed material issued by the Town of Framingham should be professional in appearance.

D. Phone and Written Inquiries

All inquiries by either phone or writing will be responded to by the proper person in an expedient manner.

Phone calls placed to a specific person are to be taken whenever possible. Initial phone messages must be returned within a 24-hour period. Employees at all levels must adhere to this timeline. If an employee is not available, the caller should be given that information and informed when the person will be available. Alternative help should of course be offered in the interim.

All written inquiries, be they complaints, compliments or suggestions should be acknowledged in an appropriate manner. The initial response should be within no more than three days of receipt of a letter.

The value of automated phone answering systems should not be discounted solely in the pursuit of excellence in customer service. Any department that has such a device must assure that it can be easily bypassed to achieve direct contact with the office.

#### E. Information and Referral

Many times residents will inquire at Town Hall for issues that are not within our domain. Every effort should be made to refer them to the governmental agency or community service agency that is best able to handle their concern. All referrals should include a phone number or location of the suggested agency if at all possible.

Internal referrals should be handled in a similar manner. If a person on the phone is being referred to a different department the caller should be given the direct dial number for future reference and then automatically transferred through the Centrex system. Customers should not be made to call back at that time.

If a referral is made to another Town department, there must be certainty that the referral is correct. If there is some doubt as to the proper referral, the referring department should ascertain the appropriate contact before connecting or directing the customer. If this information is not obtainable the customer should be directed to a supervisor in the initiating department.

### III. Internal Service Departments

Several Town departments are in the existence to serve other Town departments directly and not the general public. The Town's customer service standards are fully applicable to our internal service departments. The ability of the Town to meet its own needs in a professional, efficient and customer service orientated manner is a key ingredient to offering such a service to the public.

### IV. Measurement

The Town of Framingham is committed to continual improvement of its operations based on the philosophy of excellence in customer service. Proper measurement of customer service initiatives is vital to this goal.

A. Complaints

Each department must have a complaint log. Whether a complaint is formal or informal, written or verbal it must be entered into the complaint log. The substance of the log is up to individual departments, but must include at minimum the name of the complainant if available, the time and date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, the employee handling the situation and the disposition of the situation.

B. Monitors

From time to time the Town will utilize monitors for the express purpose of evaluating customer service responses from various Town agencies. The monitors will file a complete report of their experience, describing any perceived strengths and weakness in detail, with the Town Manager and the involved agencies. The purpose of this program is to be instructive in nature and not punitive.

C. Customer Service Evaluation Card

Every department will have available at each customer service point a return mailer card, which allows input on our performance. These cards should be prominently displayed with easy customer access.